



# MEETING MINUTES

Jersey City Environmental Commission  
City Hall – 280 Grove Street, Jersey City NJ 07302  
Gerald F. Nicholls, Chair  
Sara K. Schultzer, Vice Chair

**Meeting:** General Meeting

**Date / Location:** 29 July 2014 – 6:30 p.m.  
Caucus Room, City Hall, 280 Grove Street, Jersey City, NJ 07302

**Attendees:**

Commissioners/City Representatives	Public Participants
Tanya Marione-Stanton (JC Planning)	Debra Italiano (SJC)
Elizabeth Phillips-Lorenzo	Karen Firehock (GIC)
Gerry Nicholls	Andrew Walker (GIC)
Michelle Luebke	
Sara Schultzer	
Gabriel Ristorucci	
Mario Verdibello	
Bryant Holt	

**Prepared By:** Karen Firehock and Gerry Nicholls

**Date Prepared:** 20 December 2014

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## ROLE CALL

Seven of nine commissioners were present, which constituted quorum. Commissioners Latham was absent, and one commissioner position remains unfilled.

## SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Rain Barrel initiative was discussed. The application to obtain a rain barrel and the aspects of the program were discussed. An event in September hosted by the Hudson County Incinerator Authority (HCIA) was suggested for collaboration.

## NEW BUSINESS - JERSEY CITY SHADE TREE/GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE INVENTORY

### Project Overview -- Slide Show Presentation Covering the Following Topics (Handout)

- Introduction of Green Infrastructure Center Inc. (GIC )Staff and the work schedule (Handout)
- Urban Green Infrastructure Planning - Approaches and Strategies
- How will we construct the tree canopy by Andrew Walker
- Outcomes -- How will we use the data for environmental planning?

Following the presentation, the Commission held a goals discussion during which they expressed ideas for how they would like to use the results, specifically:

- What would the Commission like to do in the future (that they can't do now?)
- How will the canopy outputs inform your goals?

To accomplish the discussed goals, Commissioners developed the following objectives:

1. Quantify the benefits of tree canopy in terms of stormwater uptake--the commission would like to use the results to determine the benefits of trees for stormwater management, especially as urban flooding becomes a greater concern. They would also like to identify where new trees could help mitigate excess stormwater and use the canopy data to advance this objective.
2. Identify specific steps that can be taken to improve Jersey City's tree canopy and how would these steps equate results. The Commission would like to identify specific strategies based on the canopy results and the tangible benefits of each strategy. The Commission asked that layman's terms be used so that anyone could understand the results--do not make the language overly technical--relate the findings to people's everyday concerns.
3. Identify tangible benefits provided by improved tree canopy coverage and disseminate this information in the form of Fact Sheets. The Fact sheets would address different concepts and inform on the benefits of why trees matter to urban environments and economies and why their preservation and maintenance is important. For example,
  - a. How do trees help preserve or increase property values?
  - b. How do trees enhance business districts?
  - c. How do trees prevent flooding?
  - d. How do trees protect us from storms; improve aesthetics/livability of the city?
4. Take other data into account (other relevant city data): the Commission asked that GIC staff do a thorough review of all relevant city data and also coordinate with related initiatives, such as the study of sea level rise and city mitigation options. The GIC staff reminded everyone that this is also part of the work plan submitted with the project bid. GIC has already obtained much of the data and will complete this task in August, once the City signs the purchase order.
5. Work with the Commission to create goals by neighborhood/council ward etc.: The Commission may set a city-wide goal for canopy maintenance or improvement, but they also want to set specific local goals as some areas of the city may be much lower in canopy or may have more opportunities than others to add trees.



## **Schedule recap and next steps**

- Proposed October meeting for canopy review. (GIC staff noted this depends upon when in August the final city contract paperwork is received.)
- Any sites on our 'must see' list for this trip? (No specific sites were mentioned but GIC staff noted that their goal is to visit each ward as well as places where there were strange features, such as the elevated trees growing along old rail road bridge abutments or coastal areas under remediation that show up as large empty lots).
- Commissioners noted that GIC should be sure to send all recommendations and ideas through the Commission first. If outside groups contact GIC, the GIC should forward those requests or ideas to the Commission chair for response.

## **GENERAL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Attendees were encouraged to offer feedback during the Tree Canopy Study presentation.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

1. Commissioners to provide new Jersey City Recommended Tree list to Sustainable Jersey City.

## **NEXT MEETING**

The next Environmental Commission is scheduled for 16 September 2014 at 6:30 p.m. in the Caucus Room, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 280 Grove Street.

